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NICARAGUA/U.S. BROKAW: President Reagan and his administration today launched a strong new attack on the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua. It was largely aimed at persuading Congress to revive covert aid to anti-Nicaraguan rebels. However, as Andrea Mitchell reports tonight, some of the new ammunition does seem questionable.

MITCHELL: The administration wanted badly to make its case against Nicaragua on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the Sandinista regime. Former Sandinistas were produced at a White House meeting to testify against the revolution. UNIDENTIFIED MAN: They have stolen our dream and they have given us a nightmare.

MITCHELL: The president accused the regime of betraying its principles. REAGAN: The Nicaraguan people are trapped in a totalitarian dungeon, trapped by a military dictatorship that oppresses, impoverishes them while its rulers live in privileged, protected luxury.

MITCHELL: The United States asked the Organization of American States to examine whether the Sandinistas have carried out their committed to democracy and human rights, and the administration released this report. Using previously classified pictures purporting to prove that Nicaragua is supplying large amounts of arms to guerrillas in El Salvador, the report claims the number of tanks and armored vehicles in Nicaragua have doubled to 240. It shows this map, said to have been taken from a dead guerrilla, revealing what the report calls guerrilla camps and arms routes. It says there has been a steady flow of ammunition, explosives and other supplies. But an earlier draft, obtained by NBC News, says the arms flow has been sporadic, and critics who have seen intelligence reports say there is no basis for the conclusion that there is a major effort to arm Salvadoran guerrillas.

SEN.\JOSEPH\BIDEN (D-Delaware): But the degree to which that occurs, the degree to its control by the Nicaraguan government, is greatly exaggerated.

MITCHELL: The report cites sources to back up its conclusions, but more than half are press reports, many from the same newspapers which the administration often says don't report the truth about Central America. Andrea Mitchell, NBC News, at the White House.